

We also need to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank. It is closed. Republicans made a terrible mistake by allowing the Bank's charter to expire, jeopardizing hundreds of thousands of American jobs. Congress must also craft a long-term highway bill to ensure the highway trust fund will be solvent for years to come.

We have a lot to do in the coming weeks and months, and we certainly don't have time for any more manufactured crises. So I sincerely hope the Republican leadership will instead choose to do what is right to meet our country's obligations.

Would the Chair tell us what we are going to do the rest of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 719, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 719, an act to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with McConnell (for Cochran) amendment No. 2689, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016.

McConnell amendment No. 2690 (to amendment No. 2689), to change the enactment date.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. will be equally divided between the two managers or their designees.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to speak to the vote we are about to cast this morning at 10 o'clock. This is a vote to basically extend the authority and budget of the Federal Government until December 11. This September 30 is the end of our fiscal year, and at least legally, the authority to continue the government depends on budget and appropriations bills being passed by the House and Senate. That has not happened. So what we are doing is a continuing resolution. It basically extends last year's budget until December 11.

Now, that will keep the lights on at Federal agencies, and it will avoid the catastrophic outcome of a government shutdown, but it is not good policy. We have done it on our side—on the Democratic side—and now the Republicans, in control of the Congress, are doing it on their side. It buys time to reach

some sort of agreement that is longer lasting and more thoughtful.

We know the notion of a government shutdown is a disaster, but it is not a unanimous opinion in the Senate or in the House of Representatives. There are actually Members of the Senate and the House who are applauding the possibility of a government shutdown. Some of them were the same people who inspired the shutdown several years ago—a shutdown which cost us 800,000 jobs in America because of the uncertainty created by it and which created real hardship for people around our country. A shutdown, if it happened again in this context, would be even more serious in terms of its impact on the American economy.

So we have a chance. And I would just say to those who follow this debate—and there is no reason why people would follow the minutia—that in June of this year we asked on the Democratic side for the Republican leader to sit down and avoid this actual confrontation we are having today. We asked Senator McConnell and Speaker Boehner to negotiate with the President a new budget—a budget that is realistic and will not harm innocent people.

I am troubled by the notion that Republicans have that we should find war funds to continue funding the Department of Defense and ignore the non-defense parts of the budget. Senator Reid made reference to one. National Institutes of Health medical research, which is critical to America and its future, is now facing the uncertainty of no budget, and that is unfair.

Last night we had a meeting with some of the major medical researchers in the United States, and they said it is hard to convince the next generation of researchers that we as a nation are seriously committed, and it is because of this uncertainty in budgeting. It is a political problem, and one that should be solved by politicians, namely, Members of the House and Senate working with the President.

So we will likely vote—and I certainly will vote in the next few minutes—to extend the operations of the government until December 11. But if it is only for more speechifying and breast-beating by those who want to shut down the government to prove some political point, I have to say they are seriously mistaken. It is the wrong thing for America to shut down the government. It is the wrong thing for job creation to shut down the government. It is the wrong thing for our future, when it comes to medical research, education, and critical programs, to shut down the government. Those who are preaching that gospel should be reminded that 3 out of 4 Americans think they are not very thoughtful—I will clean up my words a little bit—not very thoughtful in using this approach.

So I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this continuing resolution but really to light a fire

under the leadership in the Democratic and Republican precincts and to come together in the House and Senate in the next few weeks of this continuing resolution. Let's make sure we have a budget and one that is befitting a great nation.

I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today we are voting on a clean, short-term continuous funding resolution, CR. Passing this legislation means no government shutdown. There may be some drama, but we intend to keep the government open and avoid shutdown, slamdown politics.

Shutdowns are bad for everyone. Shutdowns create uncertainty which slows economic growth, hurts the health and well-being of the entire Nation, and causes the loss of private sector jobs. Shutdowns make it impossible for Federal agencies to meet missions that serve the American people.

Let's show the American people we can work across the aisle and across the dome to get the job done.

Avoiding a shutdown is just the first step. Next, we need a budget deal to cancel sequester. Right now, our budget caps spending, but doesn't cap tax breaks for billionaires and corporations that send jobs overseas.

Americans are angry. They feel like the rules are rigged against them and that those who write the rules don't care.

Let's show them this Congress cares. The people deserve a government on their side.

That is why I am fighting to make sure they have a government that works as hard as they do. After we pass the bill to fund the government, we can move on to a new budget deal that cancels sequester, raising the caps equally for defense and nondefense domestic spending.

The budget deal will give us a framework for an omnibus funding bill that invests in America, protecting national security, rebuilding our physical infrastructure, creating jobs for today and jobs for tomorrow, and meeting our compelling human needs. The Appropriations Committee needs 30 days to get the job done after a new budget deal is passed.

I challenge leadership to work with Speaker Boehner to enact a new topline budget deal by the end of October. We can't let October brinksmanship become a Christmas crisis.

It is clear we need to cancel sequester. And it is clear that the 2013 shutdown was a disaster for everyone—not to be repeated.

This bill provides the resources to keep our government open so agencies can continue to serve the American people, keeping us safe, healthy, educated, moving, and thriving.

The bottom line is we need a new topline. With a new budget deal we get a new topline to invest in America's safety and future.

But we need to pass this short-term CR to get to a deal and not to another shutdown.